FOX RIVER CURRENT

March/April 2003 Vol. 6, No. 2 Update from the Lower Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership

# Trustees Announce First Public Meeting

By Tom Nelson, Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin

The first public meeting of the Fox River/Green Bay Natural Resource Trustee Council has been set for Tuesday, June 3 on the Oneida reservation.

The format for the meeting has been selected even though the exact location has not.

During the first session, which will take place in the afternoon, the trustees will conduct regular business. This will include adopting a charter, evaluating restoration project proposals and budgeting funds for projects to be done over the next six months.

*The Fox River is the primary tributary emptying into lower Green Bay.*

The second session will be an evening open house-style meeting with trustee representatives and technical staff available for questions, comments and discussions. Public attendance is encouraged at both sessions. The trustees hope that by participating in their meetings, people will have a better understanding of the process, which would encourage better restoration project proposals and produce a restored environment that addresses the public's needs.

All future trustee meetings will also be open to the public, however, the trustees may occasionally meet in executive session to discuss specific properties or property contract negotiations.

The Oneida Tribe is pleased to be hosting this meeting and any others scheduled in 2003. "We are honored to host the first meeting and I know that all of the trustees are anxious to lay out their plans for the trustee council, meet with the public to answer questions and begin the task of restoring the regional environment," said Paul Ninham, Oneida tribal council member and representative to the trustee council.

Deputy Administrator Bruce Baker, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Water Division, echoed Ninham's enthusiasm. "This trustee council meeting is an important step in getting restoration projects started and we want the public to see the proposals that the council is considering," he said. "The actions that the trustees take in restoring the Fox River and Green Bay are a significant part in the overall cleanup."

Another trustee will host the public meetings in 2004. For more information on how to stay informed and involved in the natural resource damage assessment process, contact Trustee Council Coordinator Colette Charbonneau at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Green Bay office, (920) 866-1726.

***In response to reader requests, the Fox River Current will regularly feature articles on the technologies used to address contaminated sediment.***

# Technical Corner ...

## Transportation Is Important Step Between Dredging and Disposal

By Greg Swanson, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

One of the important cleanup details to be determined after the record of decision is completed is the determination of how the dredged sediment will be transported to the disposal site. In the feasibility study and the proposed cleanup plan, four transportation methods were discussed as possibilities for some or all of the cleanup methods and sites on the Lower Fox River. Two of these methods have already been used for the pilot projects at Deposit N and Sediment Management Unit 56/57.

*During the SMU 56/57 cleanup, dried sediment was loaded into a dump truck for transportation to the Georgia-Pacific Corp. landfill near the Austin Straubel International Airport in Green Bay.*

A factor that affects how the sediment is transported is the method used to remove water from that sediment. At some point, most of the water must be removed before it is suitable for disposal, whether in a landfill or through some other means. The water can be removed mechanically through a press or with centrifugal force, passively in tanks or ponds, or by adding chemicals to solidify the sediment.

*A truck loaded with sediment is pressure-washed prior to departure for the landfill.*

One method of transporting dewatered sediment is by truck. This method requires that enough water has been removed to allow the remaining solids to be handled with typical construction equipment and is most suitable when the sediment only needs to be moved relatively short distances. This method was used for both the Deposit N and SMU 56/57 pilot projects.

A second method would be to transport similarly dewatered sediment by rail using gondola cars. This method is most useful when the sediment needs to be taken distances of 300 miles or more, according to Ed Lynch, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources cleanup project manager. “While rail cars can economically be used to transport large quantities of sediment over long distances, we need to be able to use existing infrastructure, like roads and loading and unloading areas for moving the dewatered sediment to a local disposal site.”

A third possibility would be to transport mechanically dredged high-solids sediment by barges on the river.

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# Health Department Announces Fish Advisory Awareness Program

By Bill Borzon, Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services

Because fish consumption advisories will be needed for many years in the Lower Fox River and Green Bay, the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services is preparing a plan for increasing public awareness on these advisories.

The plan will focus on community involvement and local leadership. According to Chuck Warzecha, who is assigned to Fox River-related health issues, "We've found that fish consumption advisories are most effective when the message comes from within the community."

Beginning this spring, DHFS will identify parties in Fox River Valley communities who have an interest in supporting this effort. DHFS staff will work with them to plan outreach efforts and to foster leadership roles at the local level.

*Because of the advisories in place, fishing along the Lower Fox River has decreased considerably.*

DHFS believes leadership and participation at the local level is important for success because community members and leaders understand local values and how best to reach community members. Broad and inclusive participation is especially important because the fish consumption advisories span large areas and attempt to reach an increasingly diverse population. Through the DHFS outreach efforts, community members and leaders will clearly define the strategies used to accomplish shared objectives.

According to Warzecha, it will be important to evaluate all of the activities in this program to make sure the people who most need the information are reached. Since the population in the Fox Valley is expected to continue to change in coming years, the plan will be usable for as long as it is needed. It will also be easily adaptable to changes in the community's communication needs.

For more information about existing fish consumption advisories for the Fox River and Green Bay, contact William J. Borzon, DHFS public health educator, (608) 267-3227, or at borzowj@dhfs.state.wi.us. A fact sheet can also be found on the DHFS Web site:

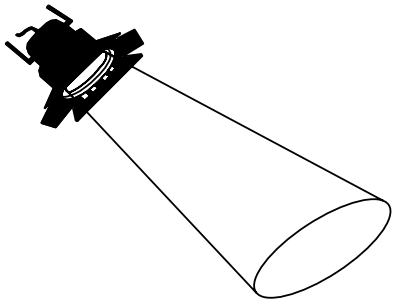
http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us/eh/Fish/FishFS/FoxAdvsry.pdf.

## Out and About...

The Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership, made up of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin and Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, is available to provide speakers to organizations in the Fox Valley area. To request a speaker from the Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership, contact Greg Swanson. Greg's contact information is listed on the back page of this newsletter.

***In response to reader requests, the Fox River Current will regularly feature successful natural resource damage assessments similar to what may occur at the Lower Fox River.***

# Spotlight On:



## Tex Tin Corporation Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Just outside the industrial, blue-collar area of Texas City, Texas lie quiet, picturesque marshes and slow-moving coastal bodies of water called bayous. These are typically desirable stops for nature lovers, however, these particular marshes and bayous are contaminated and eroded. Such environmental problems are connected to the nearby Tex Tin Superfund site.

PHOTO COURTESY OF U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

*The Swan Lake Salt Marsh near Galveston Bay is the focus of a Superfund cleanup as well as a restoration project.*

The 170-acre site was originally developed as a tin smelting operation by the U.S. government during World War II. It operated under a variety of names before becoming the Tex Tin Corp. in 1984. Tin and copper were processed there from 1941 to 1991. The site, located in a mixed industrial and residential area in Texas City, sits near Galveston Bay about 10 miles north of Galveston. During its years in business, Tex Tin used numerous waste disposal areas including ponds, slag piles and a landfill to handle its radioactive waste as well as heavy metals. Marsh areas are just south and southwest of the site. One of which, Swan Lake Salt Marsh, is the focus of a Superfund cleanup as well as a restoration project through a natural resource damage assessment. The Tex Tin property is a small part of the 3,547 acres where natural resources were lost or injured. Swan Lake's contamination stems from the acid smelter wastewater it received from the 1940s to 1960s. Metals and PCBs have been found in the lake.

An August 2000 legal agreement between the U.S. government and several companies including BP Amoco, Exxon Mobil, General Electric, Kaiser Aluminum and Monsanto will help address contamination and lost resources in Swan Lake and nearby marshes. These companies, along with federal agencies involved in the war effort, were determined to be responsible for the environmental problems of the lake and marshes. The contamination mixed in the sediment and eventually harmed native birds, fish and shellfish that are important to the area. These include threatened or endangered birds such as the white-faced ibis and reddish egret.

Swan Lake, as well as the entire bay, relies on a healthy coastal environment to support the area's tourism and commercial and recreational fishing industries. To address Superfund cleanup concerns, the

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agreement provides for a 5,200-foot rock wall to be built this year along the outer edge of eroding islands that separate Swan Lake from Galveston Bay. The wall will complement and promote the burial of contamination in the lake and prevent more erosion, resuspension and movement of contaminated sediment into the bay. In addition, 94.7 acres of marshes will be created behind the wall in 2004 to make up for the 55.8 acres of injured salt marsh that was affected.

The marsh creation project combines 95 acres of new construction and restoration to provide a new home for wildlife. The marsh will be raised using dredged, clean sediment from other local projects to build it up to promote plant growth and replace areas that were damaged and lost from erosion. According to Ken Rice, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service NRDA coordinator for the Texas Gulf, this is being done through a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers "beneficial-use project."

He said there are a lot of positives associated with this restoration project. "We have created something positive from a negative," he said. "We are using clean dredge material that would have to be placed elsewhere to turn a previously damaged marsh into valuable habitat for fish and wildlife. We are very happy with the progress of this project."

Although Rice, who has been with FWS for three years, has been involved in other marsh projects, this one is slightly different. "We have built a lot of marshes in this area, but this case represents one of the first times we have incorporated a component of the Superfund cleanup design into the restoration."

The cost of the cleanup and restoration project for the part of the Tex Tin site related to the marshes is about $5.7 million with more than half of that going to the natural resource trustees to repay past costs and fund future marsh creation. The trustees are U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on behalf of the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Texas Commission for Environmental Quality, the Texas General Land Office and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Rice, who worked for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for 23 years prior to joining FWS, said the trustees involved the community by holding a comment period and public meetings on their draft restoration plan and environmental assessment. He said, "People will see the site eventually be taken off the Superfund list and get a nice, new marsh, as well."

For more information on the Tex Tin NRDA, contact Ken Rice at (361) 994-9005 or at kenneth_rice@fws.gov.

# Second Decision On Track For Summer Completion

By Susan Pastor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

The document outlining a decision on how to clean up the remaining portions of the Lower Fox River as well as Green Bay is scheduled for completion this summer, according to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The document, called a record of decision, will explain the cleanup techniques that will be used to address PCB contamination in three areas, called operable units. These areas include the sections of the Lower Fox River from Little Rapids to DePere, DePere to the mouth of the river at Green Bay, and Green Bay. As with the first ROD, which was released to the public in January, comments and their responses by the agencies will be included. According to Jim Hahnenberg, EPA remedial project manager, most of the comments in this decision that were not already addressed in the first ROD relate to Green Bay.

"Although we had a lot of e-mails and postcards that covered a variety of issues, many members of the public didn't like monitored natural recovery which relies on natural processes," Hahnenberg said. "They thought we should do more in Green Bay."

Hahnenberg said to address those concerns, more samples were taken in the bay to give the agencies a clearer picture of the contamination there. "We wanted to be better informed before we made our decision on the bay," Hahnenberg added.

According to Ed Lynch, DNR cleanup project manager, his agency has also been busily working on the ROD. "As the lead agency, DNR has been busy putting together all the parts of the ROD. This includes inserting items like costs, 'white papers,' and

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# Profile On . . . Todd Ambs

## Past Experience Makes Him a Natural for Water Division

By Greg Swanson, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Todd Ambs, the new administrator of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Water Division, will be guiding the activities of nearly 700 employees.

Appointed to his new post by DNR Secretary Scott Hassett in January, Ambs, 44, will oversee several programs. These include watershed management, responsible for managing the quality of the state water bodies; fisheries management and habitat protection, responsible for managing and monitoring aquatic ecosystems and habitat and managing commercial and sport fisheries; and drinking and groundwater management, responsible for assuring safety, quality and availability of drinking water and ground water.

This may seem like a huge undertaking, but Ambs, who was the executive director of the River Alliance of Wisconsin for four years just prior to accepting his new DNR position, has the experience to get the job done.

In all, Ambs has worked for six nonprofit organizations and five state agencies since graduating with a master's degree in political science and speech from Eastern Michigan University in 1980. Among those experiences, he served as policy director for the Ohio attorney general, communications director for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and senior policy analyst in the Wisconsin Department of Justice when Governor Jim Doyle was attorney general.

Ambs believes that his wide-ranging background and experience from both the governmental and environmental advocacy perspectives will serve him well in dealing with the complex issues involved in cleaning up the Lower Fox River. "I've been working on

*Todd Ambs*

environmental issues for 20 years and water is a passion with me," he said. "Restoring and protecting a tremendous resource like the Fox is a big challenge and I like challenges."

Much of the DNR's efforts in the cleanup and restoration of the Lower Fox River and Green Bay is concentrated in the Water Division. "Staff from the division's central office in Madison and northeast regional office in Green Bay are key players in the overall cleanup effort," said Ambs, "And I am looking forward to working with them on this project, which Secretary Hassett has made one of his top priorities for the agency."

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This type of sediment has a solids content of about 50 percent by weight. This method could be used to move dredged sediment on the river between dams or locks and would be applicable where sediment removal is done using a mechanical dredge.

The fourth method considered for the Lower Fox River cleanup is the transport of hydraulically dredged low-solids sediment through a pipeline to the site where the sediment would be dewatered. This type of sediment has a typical solids content of 6 percent to 10 percent by weight or 4 percent by volume. This watery mixture is commonly referred to as slurry. A pipeline was used to transport sediment from the river to the dewatering facilities used in both pilot projects. It has also been used in a number of sediment dredging operations elsewhere in the country.

At Deposit N and SMU 56/57, a pipeline moved the slurry from the dredge to the mechanical dewatering facility located about a half mile away next to the river. Another possible application would involve piping the slurry to a passive dewatering pond where the sediment solids settle out and the clarified water is pumped off and treated.

After the ROD for all of the sections (referred to as operable units) in the river and bay is completed this summer, the planning and design process for selecting the specifics of transportation and disposal can begin.

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the responsiveness summary, which addresses comments from the public. Now we are to the point where DNR and EPA are reviewing all the work and finalizing our decision." Because of the number of comments that require responses, EPA and DNR share the work. "It's a joint effort," Hahnenberg said. "There are hundreds of people to respond to whose comments would not have been answered in the first record of decision. Both EPA and DNR draft different sections. Several people do the initial draft, but there is a larger group that reviews the draft and provides input right up to our management level."

Although EPA and DNR program directors have the authority to approve cleanup decisions, the agencies' heads also weigh in. "Of course, the EPA regional administrator and DNR secretary are kept informed on this project," Hahnenberg added. "They also need to agree with the final decision recommendations by the staff."

When the second ROD is final, DNR and EPA will schedule a public meeting in the Green Bay area. The communities most affected by this portion of the cleanup include Green Bay, DePere and Ashwabenon.

### *Check out these Web sites:*

**http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/wm/lowerfox/**

**http://www.epa.gov/region5/foxriver/**

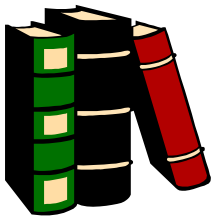
**http://www.fws.gov/r9dec/nrdar/nrdamain.html**

**http://www.fws.gov/r3pao/nrda/**

## Information Available at Local Libraries

The Intergovernmental Partners invite the public to review technical reports, fact sheets and other documents related to the Lower Fox River cleanup at information repositories set up in the reference sections of the following local libraries. Information repositories at the public libraries in DePere, Kaukauna, Little Chute, Neenah and Wrightstown have been discontinued. However, binders containing fact sheets will be mailed to and maintained at these locations as well as at the repositories listed below.

- **Appleton Public Library**, 225 N. Oneida St., Appleton, Wis.; (920) 832-6170
- **Brown County Library**, 515 Pine St., Green Bay, Wis.; (920) 448-4381, Ext. 394
- **Door County Library**, 107 S. Fourth Ave., Sturgeon Bay, Wis.; (920) 743-6578
- **Oneida Community Library**, 201 Elm St., Oneida, Wis.; (920) 869-2210
- **Oshkosh Public Library**, 106 Washington Ave., Oshkosh, Wis.; (920) 236-5200



*An administrative record, which contains detailed information upon which the selection of the final site cleanup plan will be based, is also available for review at two DNR offices: 801 E. Walnut St., Green Bay, Wis. and 101 S. Webster St., 3rd Floor, Madison, Wis. An administrative record is also available at the EPA Record Center, 77 W. Jackson Blvd., 7th Floor, Chicago, Ill.*

Prepared by the Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Supporting agencies include the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, the U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in these articles are solely those of the authors and are not necessarily shared by all members of the Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership.

## *INSIDE* FOX RIVER *CURRENT*




*Fox River Current* is published bimonthly by the Fox River Intergovernmental Partnership. Its purpose is to provide up-to-date information about cleanup and restoration efforts on the Lower Fox River. Call Greg Swanson at (608) 264-6024 to request a subscription or alternative format. Feedback on articles and ideas for future issues are welcome. Send comments to Greg Swanson, *Fox River Current*, DNR, CE/6, P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707 or e-mail <swansg@dnr.state.wi.us>





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